

Horticulture and city supply in Africa: evidence from South-West Cameroon

URBAN growth in the West African coastal growth poles provides economies of scale and the urbanization process leads to agricultural transformation, especially in terms of agricultural intensification. In this context, horticulture is particularly well suited for an urban environment and for city supplies. Horticulture benefits from intensification techniques on small areas of land and it provides good revenues for small scale farming systems.

Laurent Parrot

Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement (CIRAD), 34398 Montpellier Cedex 5, France
Tel.: (334) 67-61-75-02 — fax: (334)-67-61-56-88
E-mail address: laurent.parrot@cirad.fr

Method

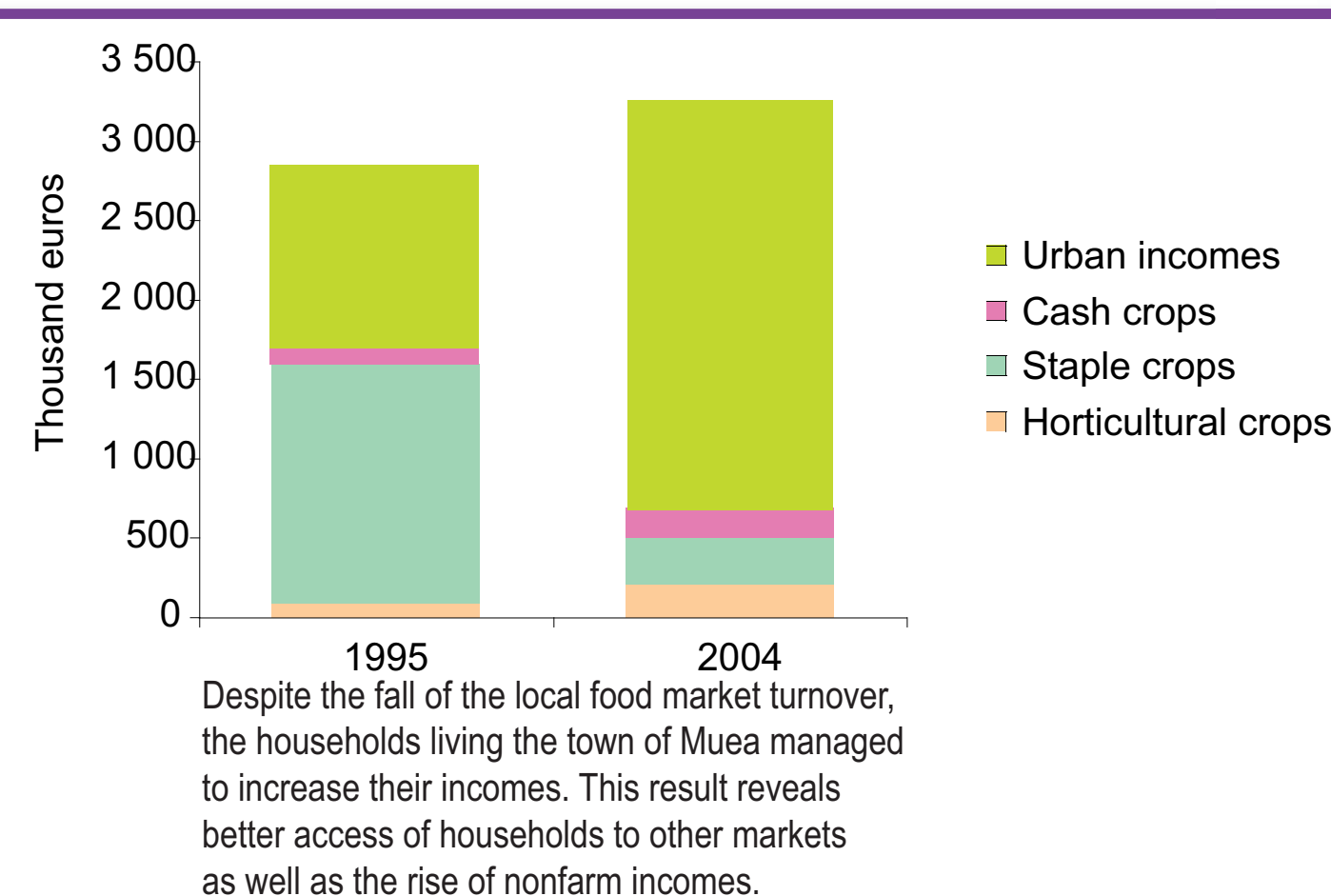
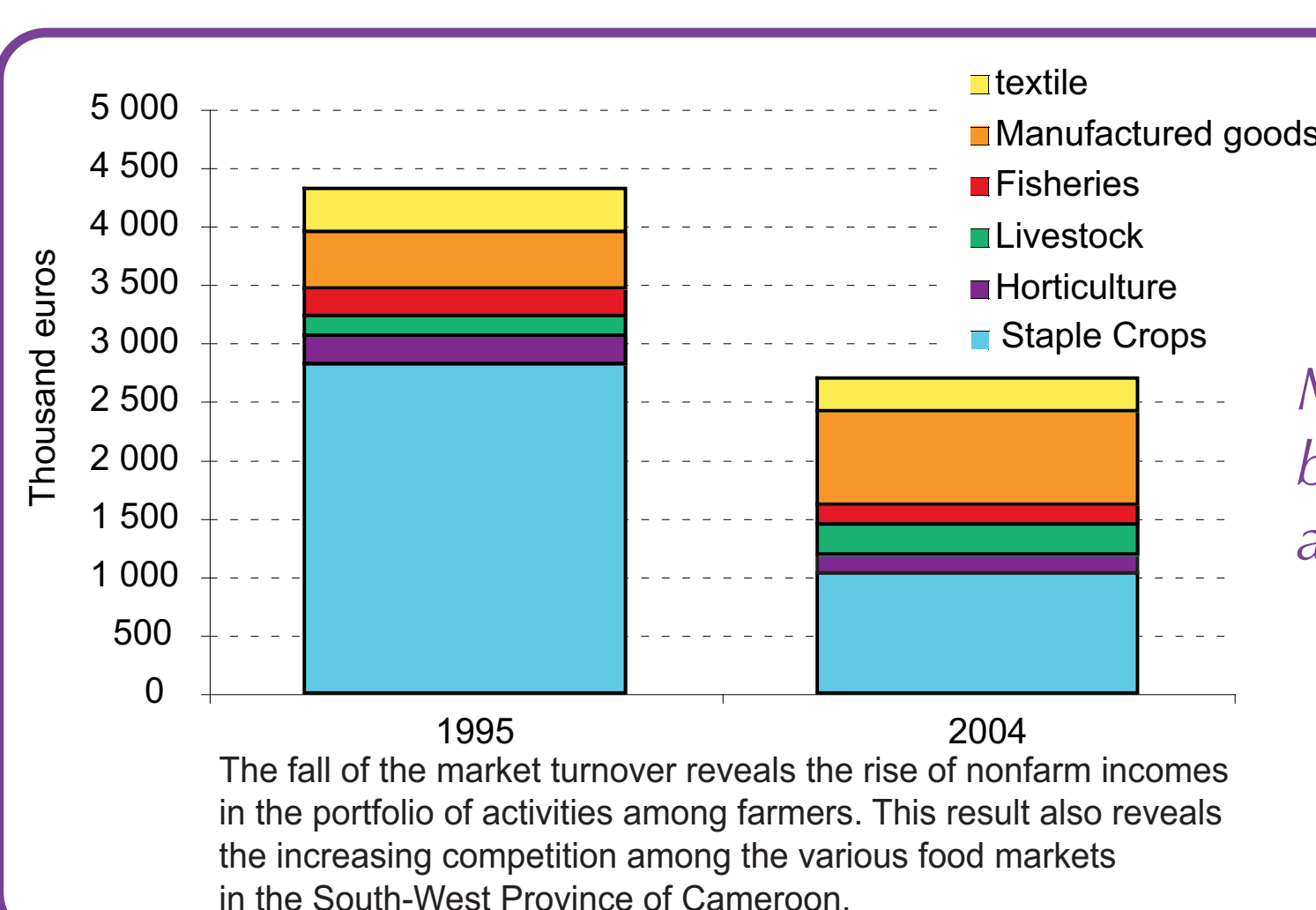
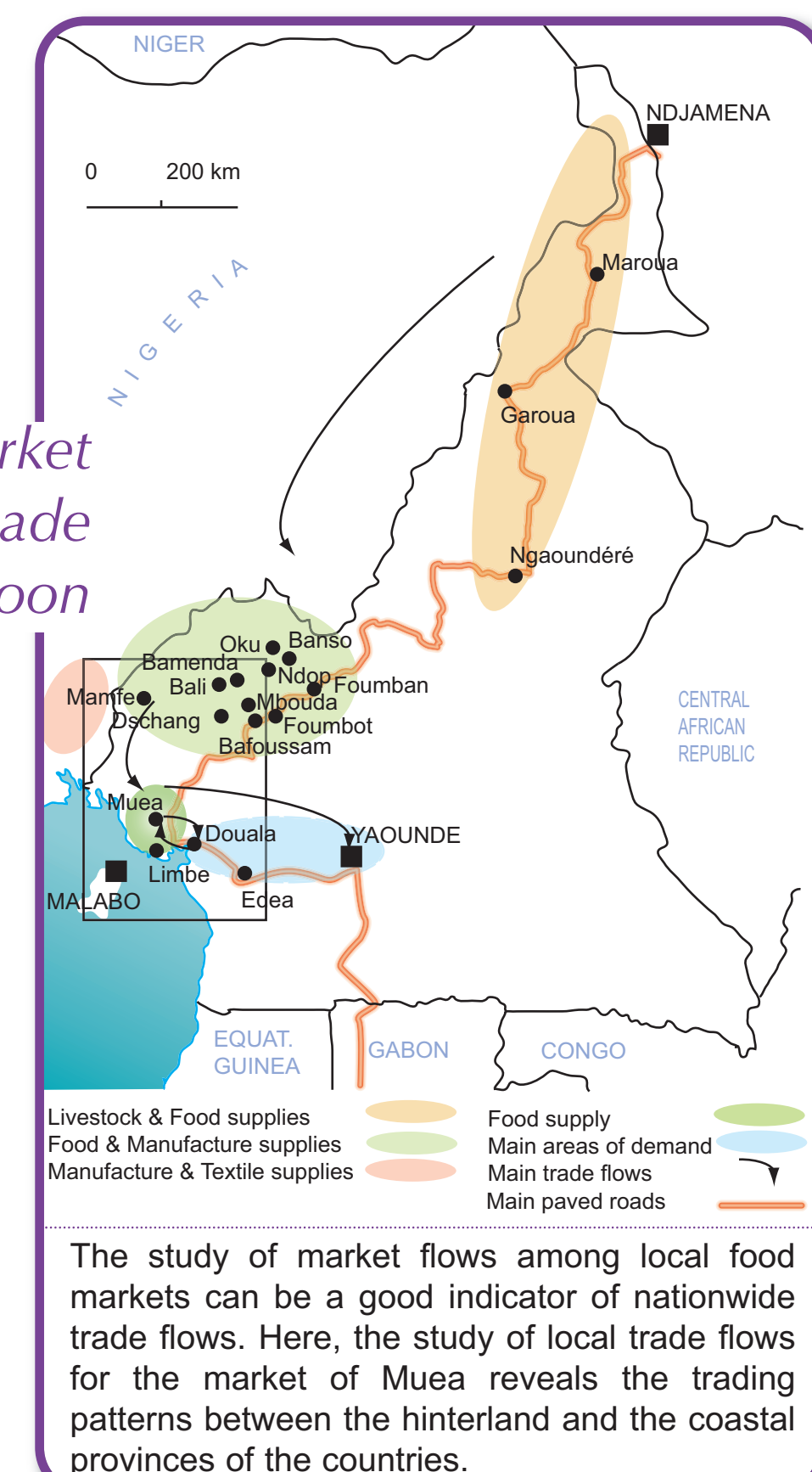
Muea was surveyed in August 1995 and again in June 2004 using independent surveys. The surveys included a complete census of households (all houses and households were recorded for a random selection), a household survey (300) and a market survey. Due to their nature and scope, the household and market surveys provided complementary and cross-checked information.

Results

Household incomes increased by 14%, with a large shift from farm to nonfarm income. Within agriculture, activity shifted from staple crops to horticulture, both for sale and in home consumption. Results also revealed a 40% fall in market turnover and a substitution effect between farm and non-farm incomes.

City supply and periurban trade has gained in importance: exports to Douala increased from 22% to 63% of the market's turnover.

Horticultural crops are still marginal to the total household incomes, but their share is rising. Only a small fraction of farmers specialize in only horticultural crop production, most of them practice share-cropping with staple crops.

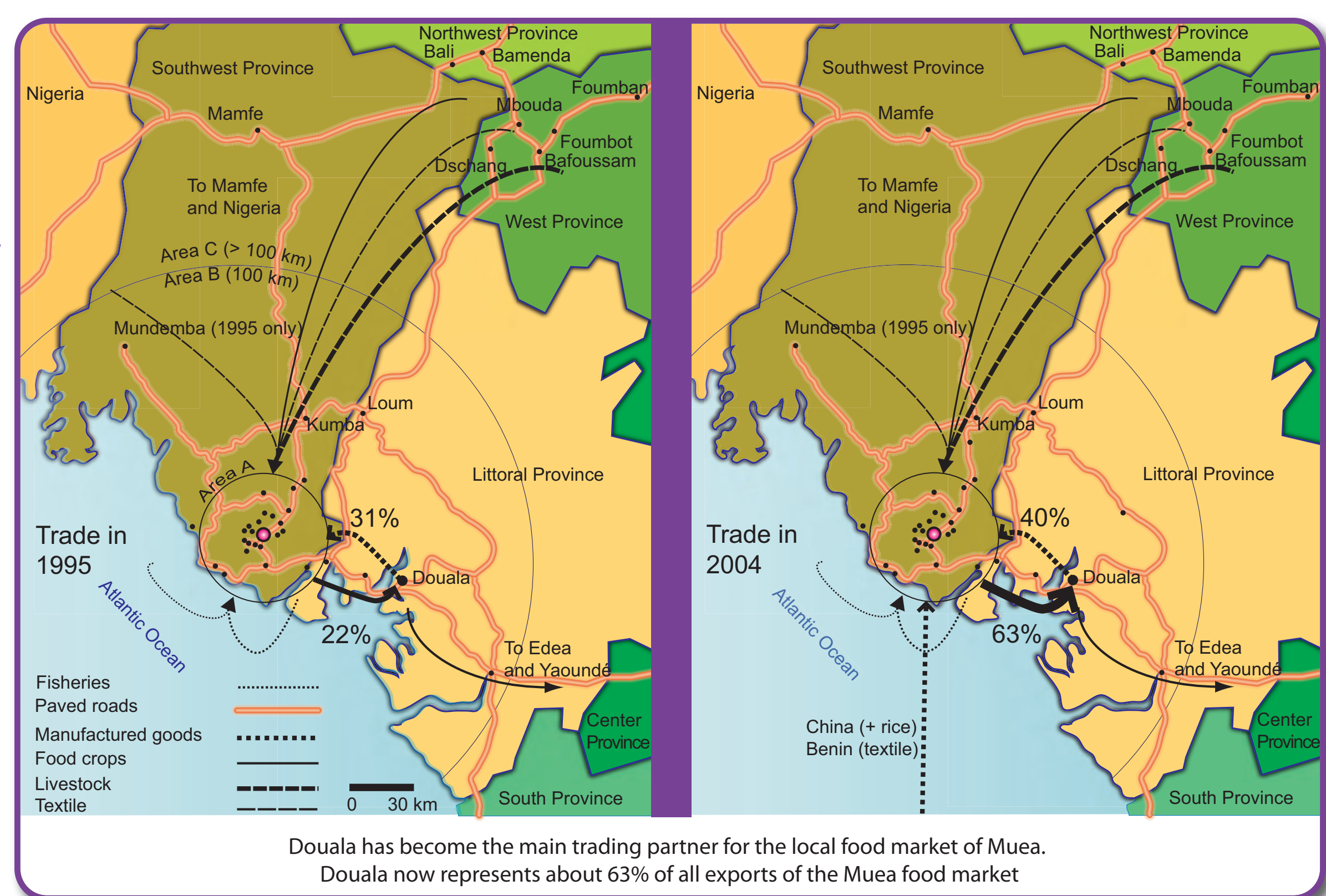


Total 1995-2004 annual household incomes in Muea at real 1995 prices

Perspectives

In fact, urban growth affects not only major towns but also most parts of the hinterlands with rural households. Improved roads have proved to be efficient in increasing regional trade. However, declining land availability impacts on agricultural practices. Horticultural production is still marginal in Cameroon but it is gaining in importance. More attention should be devoted to the monitoring of the intensification process in agriculture, especially for horticulture.

Trade flows and share of the town of Douala in Muea market turnover between 1995 and 2004 (in %)



Further reading

ALMY, S.W., BESONG, M., 1990. The farming systems of South-West Province. National Cereals Research and Extension Project, IITA/IRA/USAID, Testing Liaison Unit, Ekona, Cameroon.

GOCKOWSKI, J., NDOUMBE M., 2004. The adoption of intensive monocrop horticulture in southern Cameroon. Agricultural Economics 30:195-202.

PARROT, L., DONGMO, C. T., NDOUMBE, M. N., POUBOM, C., 2008. Horticulture, livelihoods and urban transition in Africa: evidence from South-West Cameroon. Agricultural Economics, 39(2): 245-256.

PARROT L. (ED.), NJOYA A. (ED.), TEMPLE L. (ED.), ASSOGBA-KOMLAN F. (ED.), KAHANE R. (ED.), BA DIAO M. (ED.),

HAVARD M. (ed.). 2008. Agricultures et développement urbain en Afrique subsaharienne. Gouvernance et approvisionnement des villes. Paris : L' Harmattan, 264 p.

PARROT L. (ED.), NJOYA A. (ED.), TEMPLE L. (ED.), ASSOGBA-KOMLAN F. (ED.), KAHANE R. (ED.), BA DIAO M. (ED.), Havard M. (ed.). 2008. Agricultures et développement urbain en Afrique subsaharienne. Environnement et enjeux sanitaires. Paris : L' Harmattan, 203 p.

UNITED NATIONS (2006). World Urbanization Prospects - The 2005 Revision. United Nations Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York, 210 pages.



Centre de coopération internationale en recherche agronomique pour le développement